GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:407
ANSWERED ON:20.02.2003
DISABILITY ACT
PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI

Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Human Rights Commission Chairman has written to Government thatdisability being a rights issue, the Government should bring rights of the disabled to the center stage of the developmental agenda;

(b) whether the chairman has also asked for constitution of a task force to frame a national policy and plan for the creation of a barrier free infrastructure for the disabled in accordance with the provisions of the Disabilities Act; and

(c) the steps Government propose to take in this direction?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE & EMPOWERMENT (DR. SANJAY PASWAN)

(a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995 provides for a multisectoral approach towardsempowerment of disabled persons particularly in relation to education of children, rehabilitation services, barrier free access and economic empowerment. The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, other Central Ministries and the State Governments haveprogrammes/schemes for the welfare of persons with disabilities. Many State Governments arealso providing pensions for persons with disabilities. Attempts are constantly made to improve the quality of service delivery. The Chief Commissioner for Disabilities, a statutory body underthe Act, ensures redressal of grievances and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities. Besides, the PWD Act, 1995 already provides for creation of barrier free infrastructure in transport sector, roads and public buildings by the appropriate Governments within the limits of their economic capacity and development. Action to create barrier free facilities for persons with disabilities in public buildings, on roads and in transport sector has been initiated by various authorities in Central Government. The Urban Development Ministry has prepared Model Buildings Bylaws and guidelines for construction of barrier free buildings and circulated the same to all States/UTs for adoption. While old buildings are being modified to facilitate access to persons with disabilities, instructions have been issued to Central Public Works Department (CPWD) and other agencies to incorporate barrier free features in the designs fornew buildings. The effort of making public buildings barrier-free is a continuous one and progress depends on the resources available.